



2021 Impact Report

Quarterbacking Mental Fitness

ASPENSTRONG

Connecting mental health resources and promoting mental fitness practices throughout the Roaring Fork Valley & Colorado River Corridor since 2014.

www.AspenStrong.org | info@AspenStrong.org | [@aspensstrongfoundation](https://www.instagram.com/aspensstrongfoundation)

Throughout the years in our work with Aspen Strong we have called what we do “mental hygiene,” “mental-floss,” “mental wellness,” and a “Check Up From The Neck Up.” “Mental fitness” just seems to sum it all up. This idea of maintaining and exercising the muscle that is responsible for our thinking, our creativity, our survival, and how we show up in the world is so fundamental and is the driving force behind our latest initiatives.

With a global reframing of mental health and what it means to take care of our brain; to nurture it and be in tune with it, an understanding of this vital aspect of the human experience is having its day in the sun. With good mental health we work productively and purposefully, can cope with normal life stresses, and can contribute to our communities.

At Aspen Strong, we took some time as an organization to redefine our values and hone in on how we want to prioritize our contribution to creating a thriving community.

Connection - We believe connecting with others is vital to human happiness and thriving.

Collaboration - We believe in driving mental fitness by creating partnerships and highlighting various modalities.

Approachability - We believe that mental health affects everyone and talking about it openly should be commonplace.

Curiosity - We believe mental fitness is not a one-size-fits-all approach. We support various modalities that work toward bettering an individual’s well-being and believe everyone should have access to affordable mental health services.

With this global shake-up the mental health care system is overloaded. Many people with no prior mental health issues now find themselves struggling and those with prior mental health issues find their issues exacerbated by the recent pandemic. Due to this we are focused on three new initiatives to support the community we serve.

Root Down to Rise Up - is a program that brings youth together through workshops and education to learn the fundamentals of mental fitness and how to create and access their own emotional toolbox.

Insurance Initiative - With a small portion of our local therapists accepting insurance due to barriers of the system, our insured workforce is unable to access care using insurance and unable to afford care out-of-pocket. We are getting creative and removing some of these economic and logistical barriers to increase the number of credentialed providers between Aspen and Parachute.

Community Connector - We are taking our role as the Quarterback of Mental Fitness to the next level by ensuring everyone in our community knows that resources are available and they are well within reach.

Thank you to those of you who have supported our efforts throughout the years and thank you for stepping into this new chapter with us. Please join us in being a champion for MENTAL FITNESS!



Angilina Taylor, Executive Director

OUR HISTORY

Founded in 2014 to inspire a movement in our valley that promotes healthy community dialogue where suicide is recognized as preventable and mental fitness is embraced and supported without shame throughout our community.

OUR MISSION

Aspen Strong is a mental health advocacy non-profit that is breaking stigmas through prevention resources, education, policy change, and community connection.

OUR VISION

To live in a world where mental fitness is honored, mental health crises are recognized as preventable, and mental health care is accessible to all.

OUR VALUES

- **Connection** - We believe connecting with others is vital to human happiness and thriving.
- **Collaboration** - We believe in driving mental fitness by creating partnerships and highlighting various modalities.
- **Approachability** - We believe that mental health affects everyone and talking about it openly should be commonplace.
- **Curiosity** - We believe mental fitness is not a one size fits all approach. We support various modalities that work towards bettering an individual's well being.
- **Accessibility** - We believe everyone should have access to affordable mental health services.

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PROVIDING AWARENESS THROUGH PREVENTION & CONNECTION

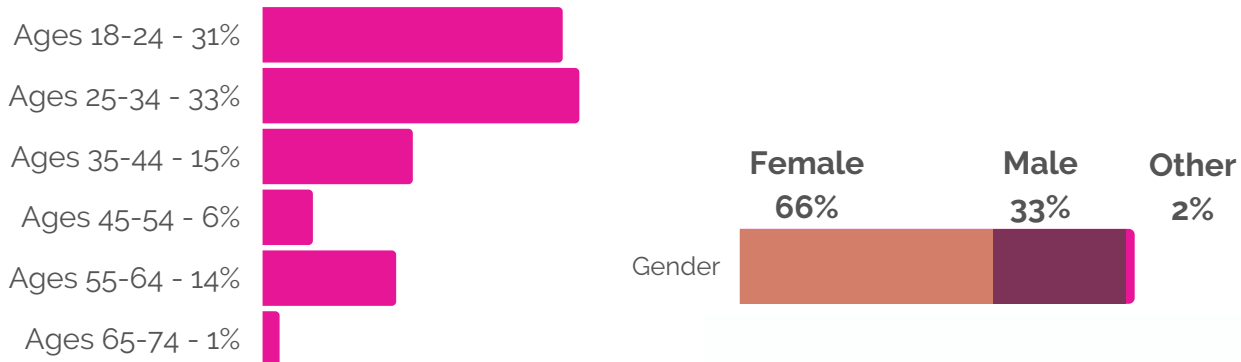
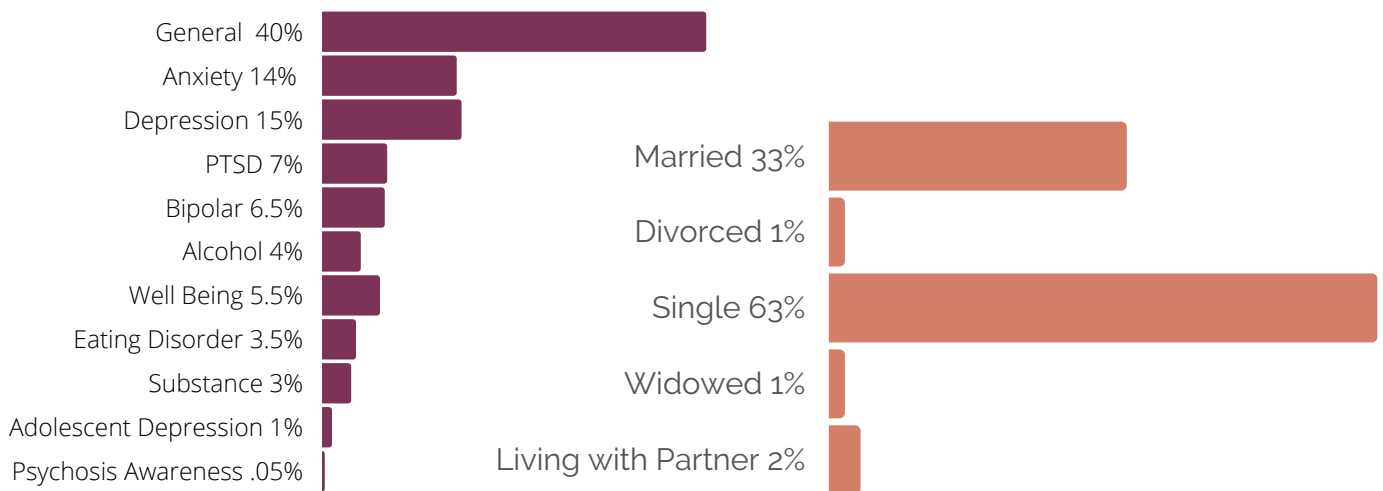
Strengthening our community's well being by **promoting the importance of mental fitness** is how Aspen Strong helps combat addiction, crisis, and the high suicide rates in our valley. **ASPENSTRONG.OGR** is our virtual tool for community connection to resources and building emotional literacy among our residents. **In 2021 over 15,191 visitors accessed support for their mental health.**

1. MENTAL HEALTH SCREENINGS

Since 2014, Aspen Strong has provided **CHECK-UPS FROM THE NECK UP** helping our community to recognize signs and symptoms of mental illness within our self or others in our community, employment, or family.

S E R V I C E S

398 Mental Health Screenings (5,836 to Date)



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2. PROVIDER DIRECTORY

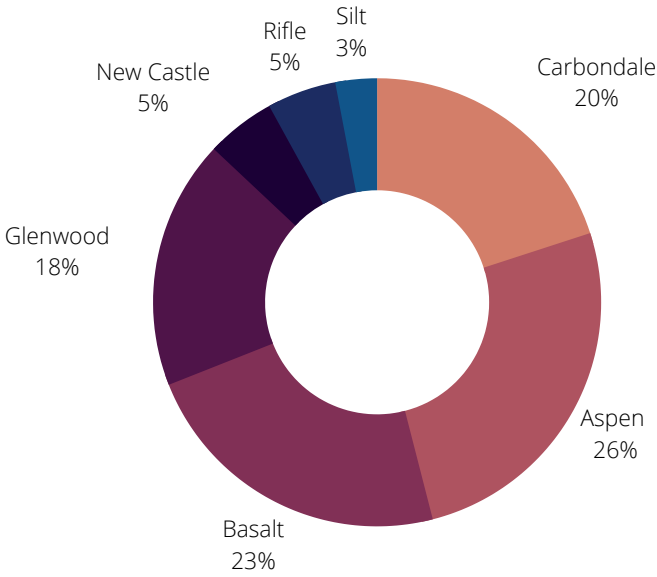
Aspen Strong recognizes much of our value is in our ability to *CONNECT* the resources to support our community in identifying gaps in the spectrum of services and providing that data to our local governments. We also act as a referral agency for you or for businesses and professionals looking to support their clients and staff. Since 2014, we have sought to do just that by creating an online, anonymous, and searchable directory. Currently, our provider directory includes **98 mental health providers and 32 organizations and was visited 1,322 times in 2021**

- Newsletter circulates to 1,780 People
- 9,271 social media followers
- Audience Demographics
 - Female 62%, Male 38%
 - Age: 26% 25-34, 38% 35-44, 21% 45-54



3. EMOTIONAL TOOLKITS

Aspenstrong.org hosts **toolkits for youth, the general public, and workplaces** providing tips and tools to boost emotional literacy on a variety of issues. These resources provide the tools to help reduce stress and build resilience towards the everyday emotions involved in achieving mental wellness. They also provide **Loved One's** of people who are struggling in finding the tools needed to understand their stress & disposition in order to play an active part in their recovery. **Our toolkits were accessed over 531 times in 2021.**



4. MENTAL HEALTH FUND

Aspen Strong contributed **\$5,048** to the valley's mental health fund in 2021. The fund, located at the Aspen Community Foundation, distributed **\$78,730** throughout the valley supporting **1800** therapy sessions. **The average amount awarded to an individual seeking financial aid was \$1,165 for an average of 10 mental health sessions.**

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1. INSURANCE INITIATIVE

The public and mental health organizations from Aspen to Parachute came together to form the Mental Health Coordination Team to support our people struggling with **stress, anxiety, depression, and fear during COVID-19**. This effort is joined by Mind Springs Health, The Hope Center, Pathfinders, Mountain Family Health Centers and is supported by Pitkin County, City of Aspen, Garfield County and Eagle County. The group meets monthly to share and collaborate on mental health resources, gaps and messaging for our valley.

Through these meetings we identified the need to have more private practitioners in our region credentialed with accepting insurance. In 2021 we did the research, gathered the data and sought the funding to make this initiative a reality. In 2022 we will see the fruits of that labor.

2. ROOT DOWN TO RISE UP

With so many parents reaching out to us in 2020 about how to help their teenage children cope through the pandemic and with teenage depression and suicide ideation on the rise due to the national crisis we created our TEEN INITIATIVE, Root Down to Rise Up.

Root Down to Rise Up is a program that brings youth together through workshops and education to learn the fundamentals of mental fitness and how to create and access their own emotional toolbox. We collaborate with other mental health organizations, providers, businesses and youth serving entities to bring these workshops to life. Some workshops to date include, "Mood Food," "The Power of Perspective" and "For You By You."

"One of the most challenging and confusing moments that can happen for a parent is when they realize their child needs help with mental health. Who do we call? Where do we go? What services are available? What does my child need? What do I need to best support my child?"

Aspen Strong is that first call. When I worked with them to conduct a recent workshop for youth on mental health, it was clear to me that they are at the center of helping youth, parents, schools and the larger community in the Roaring Fork Valley by connecting them with vital mental health services. Their insight into the mental health challenges that young people face, their personalized advocacy, and their access to the range of unique mental health services and providers are making a critical difference in the lives of young people and families"

~Dr. Will Bledsoe, Restorative Way Inc.

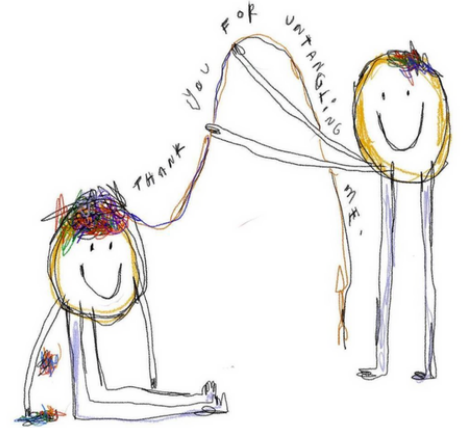
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3. SPEAKER SERIES

Aspen Strong speaker events highlight a multitude of mental health topics. Last year we addressed issues like "Parenting during COVID-19," "The Body's Response to the Pandemic," and sui. Our presentations were done in collaboration with Aspen Valley Hospital, The Aspen Times, Mind Springs Health, and various other community members and local providers. The aim of these discussions are to open up the topics for our community and make mental health resources and information accessible and approachable. **Last year we had 218 community members attend our various presentations.**

4. TIME TO TALK

Our Mental Health Support Group, Time to Talk, began in 2020. It is a free space where community members can listen and share stories of their mental health journey's in a safe and confidential environment. The group is hosted on the second Wednesday of every month by Andy Godfrey, Board Member & VP, and Scott Tesoro DDS. Both have endured their own personal traumas and find healing in helping others. **In 2021 64 people signed up for the monthly meeting.**



As an access point for local resources via their website, Aspen Strong offers connections to knowledge that is not found elsewhere in our region. The community building activities and events, mental health scholarships, youth focused workshops, and provider insurance initiatives are actively functioning, at their respective phases, as community building resources for mental health. As collaborators, Aspen Strong participates in systemic work, such as strategic planning and provider advocacy.

~Chelsea Carnoali, Pitkin County Mental Health Analyst



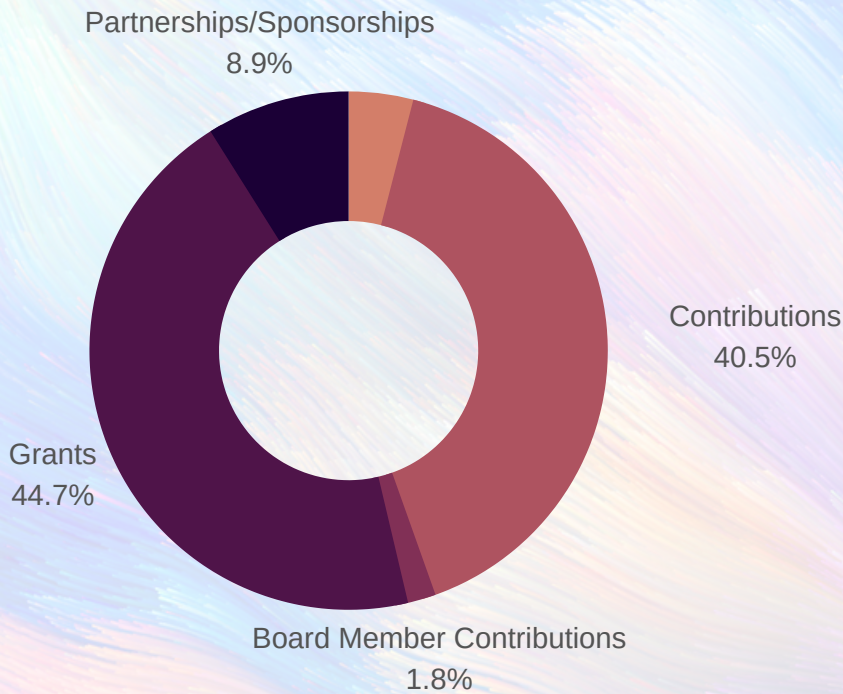
7TH ANNUAL HIKE HOPE HEAL

We came back with a bang this year. Our annual hike was filled with vendors, music, food and beverages. This community event helps bring continued awareness to mental health needs in our valley while connecting community members of all ages to open the dialog around mental health. Since 2014, 464 hikers have helped raise \$119,762.63 to support both Aspen Strong initiatives and the Mental Health Fund. **In 2021 the hike raised \$14,620 from 59 participants.**

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FINANCIALS

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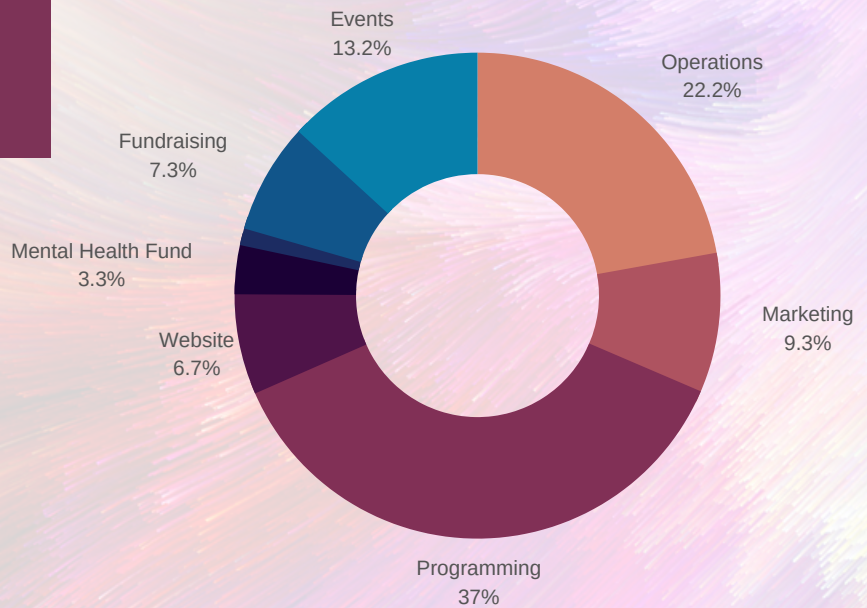
- \$144,222 was earned in 2021.
- 13% of all donations were gifts of less than \$500 from 66 households.
- Hike Income supported 60% to the Mental Health Fund and 40% to Aspen Strong Operations.

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PROGRAMS 37%

OPERATIONS 22.2%

Total Programming expenses account for 37% or \$57,406 of overall expenses.



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THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING MENTAL FITNESS

DONATIONS OVER 20K

Mark & Jennifer Styslinger

DONATIONS OVER 5K

Mark Hunt

DONATIONS OVER 1K

Christina King
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Jeane McAtamney
Eco Ventures
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The Aspen Store
The Midwesterns
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Karen Devlin

DONATIONS OVER \$200

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DONATIONS OVER \$200 CONTD

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GRANTS

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Garfield County
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Town of Basalt
The Community Foundation of Northern VA
Morgridge Family
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El Pomar Foundation
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